

BEAUTIFUL KITCHENS

APRIL/MAY 2015 £4.10
US\$8.99/AU\$810.75/NZ\$13.25

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Having two islands for different functions is ideal for a large family and utilises the floor space brilliantly

IT TAKES TWO

Refilwe and Simon Waugh transformed their kitchen by adding not one, but two, beautifully designed islands

Feature AMELIA THORPE Photography DARREN CHUNG

Project profile

THE OWNERS Refilwe Waugh, a full-time mother, her husband Simon, a company chairman, and their children, Amy, 24, Peter, 23, twins Matthew and Stuart, 21, Ella, 12, and Zach, 11

THEIR HOME 1930s house in Surrey

THE KITCHEN The previous kitchen wasn't in keeping with the style of the property and was impractical, with sight lines obscured by a bulky central pillar. By replacing the pillar with a ceiling joist, the room was opened up to allow for a new and more functional layout

ROOM SIZE 6.5 x 5.3m (kitchen only)

DESIGNER Tim Higham at Higham Furniture

CABINETRY Framed, classic and bespoke English furniture, handpainted in Farrow & Ball

Pavilion Gray estate eggshell, with Aga area in Dulux Connecticut Blue eggshell. Higham Furniture kitchen cabinetry prices from £17,000

PROJECT BUDGET About £30,000, excluding building work and flooring

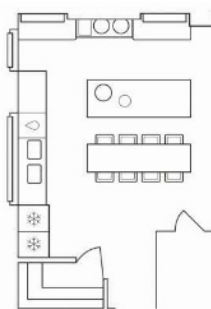
It was 10 years ago that Refilwe and Simon Waugh first saw their 1930s-built house in the Surrey countryside. 'I hated the brochure pictures of the kitchen so much that I didn't even want to view the property,' recalls Refilwe. 'It had blue cupboards along the walls and an acre of empty space in the middle.' But, with six children between them, the couple were in desperate need of a larger home. 'We were struggling to find somewhere big enough and in the right location so, in the end, the fact that the rest of the house was ideal meant it made sense to put up with the kitchen,' she explains.

It was almost a decade before they decided to tackle the room – with good reason. 'There was a large structural pillar in the centre, which contained all the electrics and plumbing,' says Refilwe. 'We knew it would be a huge headache to get rid of it.' After finally finding a builder willing to take on the project of replacing the pillar with a

steel ceiling joist and rerouting the electrics, the couple began to focus on the kitchen units. 'We didn't want standard ones that were straight off a conveyor belt,' says Refilwe. 'As soon as I went to the Higham Furniture workshop and saw the craftsmanship and attention to detail that went into the cabinetry, our decision was made.'

While Refilwe was clear that she wanted a simple, painted kitchen for its timeless appeal, she also required a functional design that would suit family life. She knew the double island solution would make clever use of the large room, linking the wall cabinetry with areas for food prep and socialising. 'Without the pillar, which obstructed the view from every angle, the space feels much more open, while the two islands are very practical,' she says. 'The mix of soft grey and blue shades combined with the oak floor and light-coloured worktops creates a warm feel, which makes the kitchen so welcoming.'

The layout



Sitting comfortably

Bar stools on either side of the 'table' island are separated by a base panel, which prevents anyone being kicked



On display

Shelving is less formal than wall cupboards and ideal for a family kitchen. Painted in a blue shade to match the wall and base cabinets, the shelves are topped with toughened glass for protection, and have LED strip lights underneath

'Before, we had acres of floor space with not much in it. Now we have a carefully planned layout where all eight of us can spend time together'



Super store

Stud walls were used to create a large walk-in pantry in one corner of the kitchen



Time to chat

A sofa provides additional seating and faces the island to allow for conversation

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Designer Tim Higham explains...

How did you create the layout?

It was vital to come up with a design that made better use of the space than the old kitchen. As soon as the structural pillar was removed, it might have been tempting to plonk a battleship of an island in the centre of the room, because it's such a large area. But we all felt that this would look bulky and wrong – and contrary to the open and spacious feel that Refilwe and Simon wanted to achieve. We did scratch our heads for a while, then the idea of creating two islands came to us. One is designed for preparing, with a sink and inset vegetable bin on the worktop. The other, oak-topped, island is rather like a table; somewhere for the family to sit for coffee and casual meals, or for the younger children to do their homework.

And what about the Aga area?

We built a false chimney breast around the stove to add character and create a focal point in the room. It's flanked by symmetrical base units and shelves for a balanced look. Refilwe chose the blue paint for this area to contrast with the Corian worktop and grey-painted furniture. It makes an eye-catching feature.

Tell us about the cabinetry design

It's classic English framed furniture with a simple beading on the doors and cock beading on the drawer fronts to accentuate its unfussy, linear design. Each section of cabinetry has legs at the end to create a freestanding furniture feel. There are also breaks between the Aga run and the sink run, which I think looks more elegant and less fitted. This layout, complete with islands, allows for defined 'zones' in the room: cooking, prepping, washing and socialising.

Were there any special requirements?

With eight in the household, the couple particularly wanted a walk-in pantry to store large quantities of food, so we sectioned off one corner of the kitchen behind stud walls.

Are there any other clever features?

To save Refilwe having to walk miles every time she prepares a meal or makes a cup of tea, there is a fridge in the 'prep' island. But I think the main reason this kitchen works so well for the family is the two-island design: there's plenty of worksurface, as well as space for everyone to congregate.

The details

CABINETRY Bespoke units, from £17,000, Higham Furniture. **Cabinetry paint**, Pavilion Gray estate eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Connecticut Blue eggshell, £47 for 2.5 litres, Dulux Trade

SURFACES Corian worktop in Antarctica, £4,750; island worktop in Full Stave Oak, £750; back-painted glass splashback in Dulux Connecticut Blue, £900, all Higham Furniture. European oak flooring, from £42sq m, The Natural Wood Floor Co

APPLIANCES Three-oven electric Aga, £7,359, plus module, £2,650, both Aga. SPC1100 built-in extractor hood, £847, Westin. SBSes 7263 fridge freezer, £2,800, Liebherr. KUR15A50GB fridge, £410; SMV69T20GB dishwasher, £600, both Bosch. MC31 microwave, £125, CDA

SINK AND TAPS Largo LAX 110-50 sinks, £288 each; Rotondo RUX 110 prep sink, £237; soap dispenser, £68; inset counter waste bin, £225, all Franke. Torrent pull-out mixer tap, £190, Caple. HC3300 hot and cold tap, £520, Insinkerator

FINISHING TOUCHES Christiana bar stools, £70 each, Atlantic Shopping. Duo Globe pendants, from £130 each, Holloways of Ludlow. Italia sofa, from £1,500, Sofa Riot

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